

27 June 1966

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Minutes of the Meeting of the 303 Committee, 24 June 1966

PRESENT: Mr. Rostow, Ambassador Johnson, Mr. Vance, and Mr. Helms

Dr. Albert Wheelon was also present.

OXCART

a. On the question of deployment of OXCART, it was agreed that the time had come to present the divergent views to higher authority. The line-up is approximately as follows: The CIA is in favor of deployment and use at this time. The State Department is against. The Department of Defense is split to the extent that Secretary McNamara and Mr. Vance oppose deployment at this time, whereas the Joint Chiefs of Staff are in favor of deployment and use at this time to satisfy requirements of targets in South China. The President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board is on record as favoring deployment and use at this time.

b. Almost all of the necessary homework seems to have been completed except for the area concerning the public stance of the United States government. There seemed to be some ambiguity about where the United States stood officially on overflights of China. At a news conference on 27 May 1966, Secretary Rusk replied in answer to a question that "They (U.S. pilots) have instructions not to intrude into Chinese air space" and later in the same conference, "It is true that we do not instruct our pilots to overfly China."

c. Ambassador Johnson said that we could hope, in response to any hue and outcry, to point to some Chinese violation as a cause for our action. We must avoid questions of basic confidence in the U.S. government as in the case of the U-2.

d. A summary of the reasons for and against deployment of this system was to be prepared at an early date for presentation to higher authority.

NRO review(s) completed.

Distribution

Ambassador Johnson
Mr. Vance
Admiral Raborn
General Taylor